The Congregationalist

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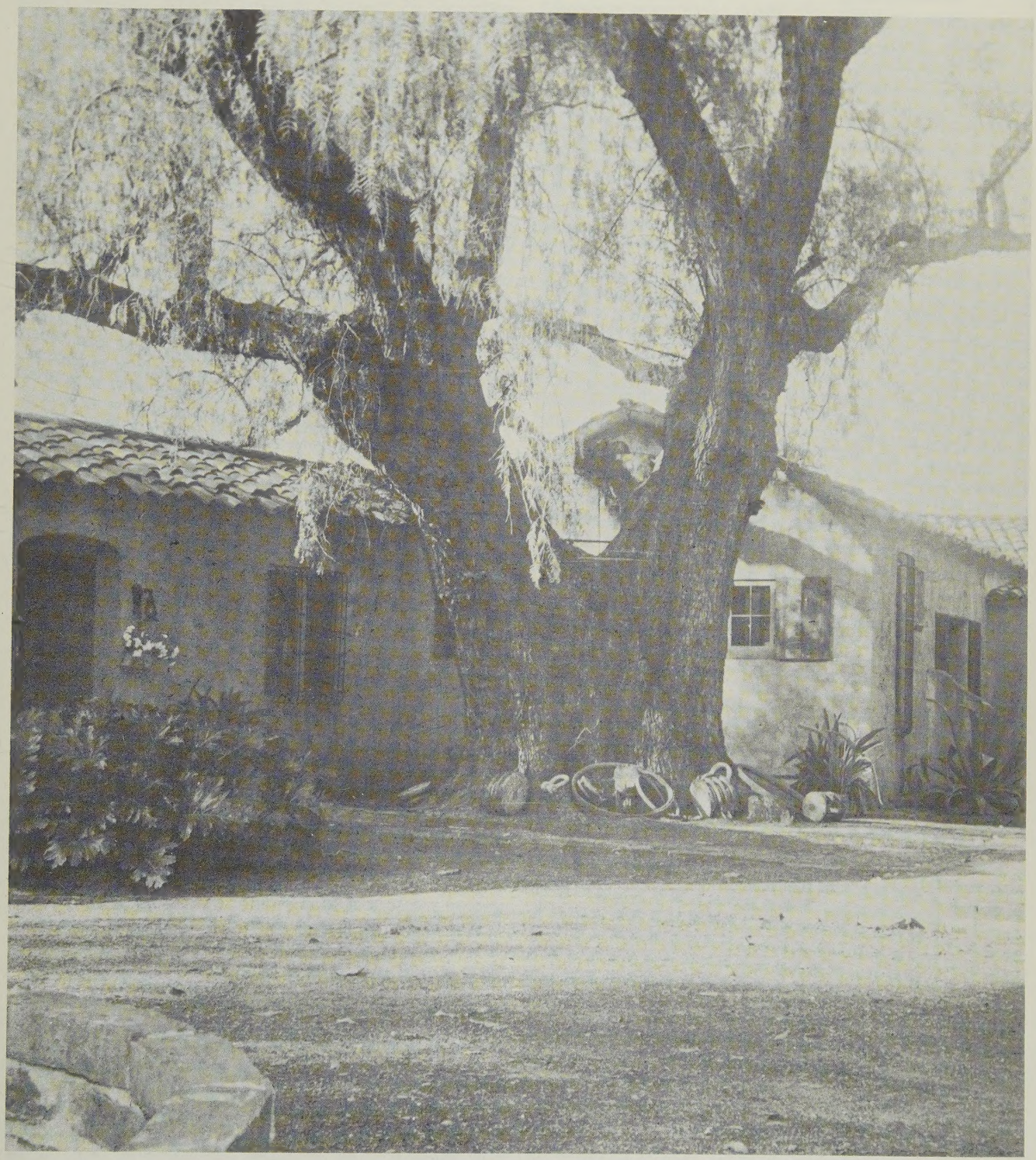

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Volume 1 THE CONGREGATIONALIST Number 3

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OUR COVER PICTURE: The estate at Anaheim, California, recently given for a place of worship for the newly-gathered Community Congregational Church at Anaheim. See article "The Missionary Spirit Alive."

THE MISSIONARY SPIRIT ALIVE

Rev. Harry R. Butman, Los Angeles, California

In a gracious Spanish-type home in Anaheim, California, close to Disneyland, a Congregational church is being gathered. The big house, shaded by a giant pepper tree, is the gift of Mrs. George D. Griffiths, whose desire was that her home should be used for the establishment of a free Congregational church. On June 25, 1957, the date of the meeting of the Uniting General Synod, she called four ministers to her home, and told them of her decision. These men, Rev. Harry R. Butman, Rev. Fred Niedringhaus, Rev. Perry Schrock and Rev. Raymond A. Waser, formed a Board of Trustees to hold the property. Their churches, Messiah of Los Angeles, First Congregational of Santa Ana, and Pomona Pilgrim, have taken the infant church under their care.

On March 9 Rev. Walter Vernon, who has been placed in the field as the organizing minister, held his first service. Mr. Vernon is an able young pastor, and in this high potential field his work is certain to bear fruit. The Community Congregational Church of Anaheim is at present the chief project of the newly-formed Congregational Missionary Society.

In the San Fernando Valley another young church is growing in strength. The Church of Our Saviour in Pacoima, under the leadership of Rev. James Kepler, and with the devoted efforts of an able group of lay people, is grappling with the many problems attendant on the formation of a new church.

Congregationalism will continue so long as we keep alive our missionary spirit.

Seen Through Other Eyes

We are sometimes told that "the eyes of all Christendom" are on our merger plan. This is usually intended to indicate that all Christians are looking with approval on the movement, and hoping and praying that the union will finally and completely come to pass.

In answer to this, the words of a prominent Chicago Episcopalian would seem appropriate. The Very Rev. Howard S. Kennedy, Dean of the Cathedral of St. James, gives permission to quote these words which he wrote to Dr. Howell D. Davies: "My thoughts have been, as I have read of your problem and met some of your people, those of perplexity and wonder as the steps taken toward merger have seemed to deny the ethos of Congregationalism. I cannot see in the present heavy pressures for organic unity any real compliance with Christ's prayer that we all may be one. Much attention is being given to the external mechanism of union without regard to interior spiritual union and to particular and treasured insights and emphases. It seems to me as a friendly observer from outside your fellowship that this has occurred in the case of the Congregational churches to a most illogical point, for the mechanics of the process will automatically nullify the definition of the churches involved".

From Another Viewer

While not concerned specifically with our own problem, these words quoted from THE CHRISTIAN WORLD (London) would seem to express the thoughts of a man who stands second to none in eminence in ecclesiastical circles. Under the heading "Total Church Unity Could Be Dangerous", this statement appears: "The Archbishop of Canterbury, speaking at the biannual meeting of the British Council of Churches, suggested that Christians should consider the 'dangers' that would be involved if every branch of the Church were united. Dr. Fisher said that if the Church could speak with one united voice, thrones and crowns might falter. 'But power is dynamite. You can realize what a terrible danger we ourselves could be in. I mean this sincerely, because if we were all one and united the danger of the freedom to differ from the majority in power would be threatened, and there has always been in the history of the world a great value in minorities and differences of opinion. Please God, some day there will be a united Church — in some sense united. But it will not come until we are all strong enough in the Christian faith to bear with one another's differences and to refuse to exterminate them by force. . . . We are not yet fit enough in the sight of God to be a completely united Church'."

WHOSE AUTONOMY IS THREATENED?

Since the circulation of a "statement" regarding the current lawsuit against the Boards and Agencies of the Congregational Christian Churches, the American Board, and the Evangelical and Reformed Church, by four Congregational churches and ten individuals, Palmer D. Edmunds, Esq., of Chicago, prominent Congregational layman, has sent a letter to Messrs. Ashby Bladen, Alford Carleton, Truman B. Douglass, Fred Hoskins and Frank J. Scribner, reading in part as follows:

"I have read your 'statement' to Congregational Christian Churches and members concerning a suit filed against the boards and agencies of the Congregational Christian Churches, the American Board, and the Evangelical and Reformed Church, by four Congregational churches and ten individual Congregationalists.

"Among other things, you assert that the purpose of the above suit is not simply to interpret the union, but to prevent and destroy it. In support of this you quote from the plaintiffs' complaint as follows: ' . . . accordingly, neither by the attempted consummation of the Basis of Union, nor by any acts of the Congregational Christian Churches or of the Evangelical and Reformed Church or of the General Synod of the United Church of Christ can any such union, merger or consolidation as that projected in the Basis of Union and Interpretations be legally and validly effectuated.'

Open Courts Our Right

" 'Legally and validly effectuated': I ask you, should this union, or any union, be effectuated, if it cannot be effectuated 'legally and validly'? Are you espousing a union which cannot be legally effectuated? What is wrong about raising the question as to legality and validity and putting it to the test? In this country it is the law of the land and not ecclesiastical ukases that determines what is legal and valid and what is not. We are a free nation because our courts are open to every citizen for redress of his individual grievances. The religious rights of the citizen are at the very top of the list. Condemnation of any individual, or group of individuals, for seeking the protection which the law provides against arbitrary and invalid ecclesiastical action, comes with ill grace from any source. From a Congregational source it is beyond ready understanding.

". . . You then say 'Curiously enough, while claiming autonomy for themselves, they call in the court to control the autonomy of others. Asserting the right to interpret for themselves the Christian way of life and its obligations, they nevertheless insist that those in the fellowship, however numerous, who disagree with them, may not express *their* interpretation of the Christian way through church union.'

Coercion: Which Way?

"This asseveration is without documentation. I have searched the record in vain for any that might support it. So far as plaintiffs' complaint is concerned, there is no attempt to coerce you into anything, or to control your autonomy or the autonomy of the Congregational churches in any way. For aught the complaint seeks, you as individuals are free to become members of the United Church of Christ as you so desire. Any Congregational church may become a unit of it without qualification or restraint. What more, or else, could you ask in the way of autonomy?

"But how about the four Congregational churches and the ten individual Congregationalists who have brought the action, and the rest of us who do not choose to be members of the United Church of Christ? You say the Basis of Union has been validated. By its provisions 'All persons who are members of either communion at the time of the union shall be members of the United Church.' (Basis of Union VII) 'All . . . local churches and church members of the present Congregational Christian fellowship will be regarded as belonging to the fellowship of the United Church of Christ, whether they have voted approval or disapproval of the second resolution.' (Information on Voting.)

"Who is 'controlling the autonomy of others' here? On the record, the answer is a simple one. I will leave it to you to make it."

A LATE BULLETIN

As this issue goes to press, news is received that Judge A. O. Dawson of the Federal Court in New York has denied all three motions made by the defendants to dismiss this case. As a result of this, the whole merger will have to go to trial.

IOWA PAPER STUDIES THE SITUATION

One of the clearest and most objective studies yet undertaken of the situation which confronts Congregationalism is to be found on the church page of the Cedar Rapids (Iowa) GAZETTE for March 1. (Bruce Fishwild, Church Editor). After consulting leaders of the churches, both those for the union and those opposed, Mr. Fishwild states clearly both the strength and the weakness of the union movement in eastern Iowa. He mentions the fact that in two cases Iowa churches of the two denominations have already merged. Dr. Judson Fiebiger, State Superintendent, is quoted as approving the "year end inventory" of the new denomination, which describes the move as "the first time in American history two major Protestant denominations of divergent backgrounds have come together to form one church."

With full recognition of the strength of the union movement, after assessing the relative number of churches in favor, those opposed, and those waiting to see the constitution, Mr. Fishwild concludes: "An examination of the Iowa situation shows that beyond the official proclamation and the progressing integration at top levels of the two denominations, there is a large body of conscientious Congregationalists that have serious reservations. These reservations, plus the individual congregations' traditional autonomy, obviously are going to mean less than 100% participation in the merger. Depending on the wording of the new constitution, it could be very much less — in Iowa at least". (Quoted by permission.)

Our Devotional Column

Dr. Harry W. Johnson, Boise, Idaho

REVELATION "2:17. *"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches."*

The Book of Revelation was written as a message to seven little churches facing a hostile world. Much of this message was couched in such involved symbolism that only those for whom it was first intended would be able to interpret it with complete understanding. The exact meaning of certain parts of these symbolic references is still obscure.

But the heart of what John was saying is very clear. The Revelation of John was a message of encouragement to the seven churches. They had the assurance of Christ Himself that the Kingdom of God was coming. Those who were faithful to their Lord, in the face of a hostile world, would receive a rich reward from Christ Himself. Enemies who sought their destruction could not prevail against them, for the Lamb of God would come, and then the reign of righteousness would be established and the faithful would share in His glory.

This is a message for our times. Have faith in the power of a righteous cause to survive in a hostile world. "Truth, crushed to earth, shall rise again." Right is right. And God is still on His throne. If you are giving witness to your faith in a cause that is right, be assured that a hostile world cannot prevail against the purposes of God. And God will reward the faithful. The Kingdom of God will come. The cause of right will triumph. Be of good cheer!

PRAYER: "Almighty God, Father of all the children of men: we are grateful to Thee for the Christian gospel, with its message of Thy love. We thank Thee that in all generations there are those who have faith in Thee, faith in the power of the righteousness of God to overcome the world. For the little band of followers by the Sea of Galilee, for the seven churches facing a pagan world, for every little group of the faithful who loved Thy Word more than they loved life, we give Thee thanks. Help us to share their faith, and to give unwavering witness as they have done, to the gospel of Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen."

Why Three Organizations?

(Reprinted from a brochure describing the National Association, at the request of a reader.)

There are three groups fighting for the preservation of Congregationalism.

They are:

a. The Committee for the Continuation of Congregational Christian Churches.

b. The League to Uphold Congregational Principles.

c. The National Association of Congregational Christian Churches.

Some people ask, "Why have three organizations? Why not merge them into one?" Let us look at the functions of these bodies.

The basic purpose of the Continuation Committee is to strive earnestly for the continuance of Congregationalism. The Continuation Committee is composed of individuals, and it has been instrumental in organizing ecclesiastical and legal opposition to the merger.

The League to Uphold Congregational Principles holds that no official is empowered to speak for the Congregational churches on economic and social matters. Only the churches themselves can so speak. The League is composed of individual Congregational laymen.

The National Association exists primarily for the purpose of providing fellowship between Congregational churches.

The autonomy of the local church and the fellowship of the churches are the two foci of the Congregational ellipse. The functions of the National Association are spiritual and ecclesiastical, and they are quite apart from the purposes of the other two organizations.

The matter of uniting the three bodies has been discussed several times by the leaders of the three groups, and it has been concluded that the jobs are of such distinct and separate natures that it is better to have three organizations working in harmony, than one tightly-knit body. In this way room is provided for many types of people to work for the preservation of Congregationalism.

ON THE LOCAL LEVEL

The Annual Meeting of the National Association at Hartford last fall instructed the staff to prepare and circulate the names of local, district, and state organizations formed for the promotion of Congregationalism, together with the names of chairmen or correspondents.

The following list gives the names of such organizations reported up to February 28, 1958. *Connecticut,* Connecticut Congregational Fellowship, Dr. Henry David Gray, South Congregational Church, Main and Buckingham Sts., Hartford 3; *Illinois,* Congregational Christian Laymen's group, Mr. A. Stuart Oskamp, 262 Glenwood Ave., Glen Ellyn; and Central Association, Mr. Warren Ritzma, 6645 W. 19th St., Berwyn; *Iowa,* Iowa Fellowship of Congregational Christian Churches (formerly Iowa Council of Concern), Rev. Max Strang, 1109 W. State St., Marshalltown; *Kansas,* Kansas Council of Concern, Mr. Charles M. Good, 124 East 11th St., Hutchinson; *Massachusetts,* Massachusetts Committee for the Continuation of Congregational Churches, Mr. Richard N. Bail, 76 Fullerton Ave., Whitman; and Southeastern Massachusetts Organization for the Continuation of Congregational Christian Principles, Mr. Robert D. Hunt, c/o Geo. H. Hunt Co., 750 Broad St., East Weymouth; *Michigan,* Michigan Council for the Advancement of Congregationalism, Rev. Alan Jenkins, P.O. Box 5, Royal Oak; *New Hampshire,* New Hampshire League to Preserve Congregationalism, Mrs. Arthur H. Benoit, R.D. #2, Concord; *New York,* New York Fellowship of Congregational Christian Churches, Mrs. Leroy Edwards, 361 Clinton Ave., Brooklyn; *Ohio,* Ohio Congregational Christian Council, Mr. Edwin M. Arnos, 312 Summit St., Toledo 3; *Oregon,* North Willamette Association of Oregon, Rev. Horace L. Batchelder, 517 Jefferson St., Oregon City; *Pennsylvania,* Pennsylvania Association of Congregational Christian Churches, Rev. John F. C. Green, 322 Olive Ave., McKeesport.

Other groups organizing for this purpose are requested to notify the Executive Secretary of the National Association and the Editor of THE CONGREGATIONALIST of their action, giving the name of a correspondent. Further lists will be published in future issues. Action has been started in Indiana, and a Maine meeting is scheduled for early in the month of April.

WOMEN'S WORK

On March 19 over one hundred and fifty women attended a Women's Meeting for Strengthening Congregationalism held at Community Congregational Church, Lathrup Village, Michigan. Women from eighteen churches in the Detroit area and outstate attended the all-day session which was planned to fulfil a need strongly expressed in the Seminar on Women's Work at a Council for Advancement of Congregationalism held in November at Royal Oak.

Three members of the Commission on Women's Work, Mrs. Alan Jenkins of Royal Oak, Mrs. Robert Collins of Grand Rapids, and Mrs. George Berkaw of Detroit took active parts, as did Miss Evelyn Bumgarner of Lansing who is a member of the Publications Commission, and Rev. John Rose, pastor of the host church and member of the Commission on Missions, who gave the keynote address.

After the opening devotions led by Mrs. Malcolm Burton of Pontiac, the group divided into seminars on Missions, Program Planning, and Christian Education, led by Mrs. George Berkaw, Mrs. Alan Jenkins, and Mrs. Carl Neilsen. At the afternoon session each seminar brought reports to the entire group for discussion.

Others on the program were Moderator George V. Bohman, who brought greetings from the National Association, and Dr. Alan Jenkins of the Royal Oak Church, who spoke on the basic issues facing Congregational churches. Mrs. George V. Bohman presided.

Through this day of devotion and study together a warm feeling of fellowship in addition to that in existing Associations and the Michigan Conference was provided for women vitally interested in the survival of Congregationalism. Plans are in the making for another such occasion, perhaps in the Fall.

— Mrs. George V. Bohman, Royal Oak, Mich.

And In California, Too

Women of the Southern California churches which are members of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches held their second meeting this year February 13, when the Women's Association of the First Congregational Church of Los Angeles was hostess. Many women, members of non-member churches, sincerely interested in learning more about continuing Congregationalism and the National Association, were welcomed from Pasadena, Long Beach, Santa Ana and Panorama City.

The meetings have been planned for the main monthly meeting day of the hostess group so that each visiting group has been able to observe the hostess organization's regular methods of procedure. Our minister, Dr. James W. Fifield, Jr., his brother, Dr. L. Wendell Fifield, Mrs. Paul A. Quaintance of the Commission on Women's Work, and Rev. Harry R. Butman, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the National Association, were our speakers.

The Women's Guild of Service, Church of the Messiah, Los Angeles, Mrs. Robert W. Rickard, President, will be hostess to the group in June.

We can say without hesitation that such meetings are supplying what women of our area have needed — and wanted — in increased fellowship and friendliness, and in understanding of and loyalty to our Congregational Way.

— Mrs. Robert S. Reese, *President*
Women's Association, First
Congregational Church, Los Angeles

FRIEND LAYMAN: Are You Concerned?

Are you, Mr. Layman, concerned over what is going on in our Congregational fellowship? Are you troubled lest the lack of information among your fellow-members, the conflicting statements made about the meaning of the proposed union, the unthinking statements about how good it would be if the various denominations would only get together, or some other factor, should take away the freedom and the sense of responsibility toward God alone, which have made Congregationalism great? Are you concerned about what to do?

In more than one church, two or three concerned laymen have really *done* something about it. Remember that in a Congregational church the *members*, not the minister, not the Association, not the State Conference, not the General Council, but the members, *are* the government. You and other concerned laymen *can* do something. Here are some suggestions:

1. Let two or three of you be gathered together to consult, and to consider the meaning of the Basis of Union and of the actions which have been taken to put it into effect. Study it *all*, carefully and prayerfully. If you are not satisfied that the document, and the actions thus far taken or about to be taken, are *sure* to preserve the essential meaning and value in Congregationalism, it will be time for the next step.

2. Let this two or three invite other members of your church to share their thoughts. Point out to the newcomers what you have found, which causes you concern. Get them to study it as carefully as you have. These meetings need not be large. Perhaps they can best be held at the homes of members. Certainly they should be informal. And when a handful of you are agreed, it may be well to take another step.

3. Organize yourselves into a Committee. Then let this committee get to work to spread to the rest of the church the convictions at which it has arrived.

4. You will probably want to read, and distribute, material which has been written on the "Pro-Congregational" (in contrast to "pro-merger") side. "Official" material is designed to help you *get into* the union. Intelligent laymen will also want to study carefully the reasons which have been presented for *not* becoming a part of the union. You can get material on this side from: Committee for Continuation of Congregational Christian Churches, Room 2308, 100 North LaSalle St., Chicago 2, Ill., or the League to Uphold Congregational Principles, Box 628, Hartford 1, Conn. Copies of THE CONGREGATIONALIST may be obtained from Rev. Joseph J. Russell, 61 East St., Melrose 76, Mass.

AND MOST OF ALL: Study all this with an open mind, and then *act*. Your Committee may want to call a church meeting, when it believes that the members are sufficiently informed, with one or more of the following aims: (a) To rescind a vote in favor of the union which may have been taken years ago without sufficient knowledge of the meaning; (b) To adopt a "Protective Resolution" to prevent your church from being taken into the union inadvertently. (You may have a lawyer in your church who will help you to word this.) Or (c) You may want to vote to join the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches, which was formed in 1955 by some of the churches which are determined to preserve the freedom and fundamental principles of our free order of church life.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

"Wait and See"

"A constitution is the fundamental law or principles of government of a nation, state, society or other organized body of men." (Webster)

In a Congregational church the fundamental law and the principles of government are set forth in a written document which is the constitution of that local church. This constitution is usually drawn up by the charter members of the church. It declares that the government of the church shall be vested in its own members. No other ecclesiastical body or church authority outside of this local church is to have any official authority or power of veto over their actions in the affairs of this church. In Congregationalism "the church" is this local group, so organized.

Among our E & R friends, the whole denomination, the national body, is "the Church". All lesser groups, such as the synods and the congregations, are just local parts of the whole: the Evangelical and Reformed Church, nationally incorporated, with a national constitution governing the whole and all its parts. This national constitution, the constitution of the General Synod, is the "fundamental law" in the E & R Church. This law applies to all synods, to all congregations, and to all persons, ministers and laymen, who claim membership in "the Church". Persons are members of the national body, the E & R Church, and are subject to its discipline. Local groups are called "congregations".

Contradictory Polities

The polity of each of these denominations directly contradicts that of the other. Any union between these two must be "either-or". Either the "fundamental law" and final authority is in the local church or it is in the national body. It obviously cannot be in both.

The Basis of Union provides for an overall constitution for the whole body. The request made by our General Councils in 1952 and 1954 that the constitution be for "the General Synod only" was flatly denied by the E & R representatives. The E & R folks wanted a constitution for the whole body, and they got it. The E & R leaders all along have insisted upon such an overall constitution, as a basic requirement for this union. When written and adopted, this constitution will become the "fundamental law" of the United Church. Any Congregational church which becomes a part of the United Church will have joined a new denomination. The United Church will have final authority over local groups, whether they still call themselves churches, as we Congregationalists do, or accept the status of "congregations" as the E & R people do.

By this merger, if consummated, final authority passes *from* completely independent Congregational Christian churches *to* the General Synod of the United Church. A Congregational church which becomes a part of the United Church is no longer the final arbiter of its own affairs. By accepting the constitution of the General Synod, it forfeits to the General Synod the right to be the final arbiter in the affairs of that church.

A Question of Legal Rights

This will be true, in principle, no matter how mild and innocuous are the controls to be set forth in the constitution of the United Church. "Waiting to see the constitution" therefore implies a willingness on the part of a church to forfeit its legal right to complete self-direction, providing the new General Synod promises to exercise its authority with tact and restraint.

In most states, there are state laws which make it legally impossible for a Congregational church to vote itself into another denomination having a different faith, or a different polity. If a majority of the resident members of a Congregational church voted to join such a denomination any minority of those members voting against such action would continue to be the Congregational church, and would hold title and possession to all property.

This principle has been established by many court decisions in many states. But those who are determined to force this merger through have made necessary another testing of the issue in the courts. The legal difficulties, which a church may bring upon itself by trying to vote itself into the United Church, should be carefully studied. What do the laws of your state say about such action?

Instead of "waiting to see" the new constitution it may be more important to wait and see what the courts have to say. And while your church is waiting, it should carefully protect its present status as a free Congregational Christian church.

A Word from the Moderator

Professor George V. Bohman,
Royal Oak, Michigan

The Annual Meeting

Time: October 21-23, 1958
Place: First Congregational Church, Detroit, Michigan

Make your plans now for a fall trip to Detroit for the Annual Meeting of the National Association which will be held at the commodious and historic First Congregational Church in that city, October 21, 22, and 23, 1958.

Detroit was the birthplace of the National Association in 1955. Now as we return for the Annual Meeting, there are five strong member churches in the immediate area: First, North, Lathrup Village, Pontiac, and Royal Oak. As host, First Church will be assisted by these churches.

Our goal for the meeting is 100% representation of our member churches. To assist in reaching this goal, a mileage pool to help defray the transportation costs of delegates from a distance will again be used. Plan to select your voting delegate early but urge as many others as can to come to the Detroit meeting. Ask friends of continuing Congregationalism in non-member churches near you to attend, too.

Meetings of Commissions

Thirty-six members of five Commissions have accepted appointment and the membership will be announced in forthcoming issues of THE CONGREGATIONALIST. On March 4 the Publications Commission, chaired by Dr. Henry David Gray of Hartford, met in Detroit to organize and plan several projects. On the same day the Commission on Missions held its second meeting in Chicago in conjunction with a meeting of the Missionary Society. Soon after Easter the Commissions on Religious Education and Women's Work will convene for the first time, and the Commission on the Ministry will meet a little later in the year.

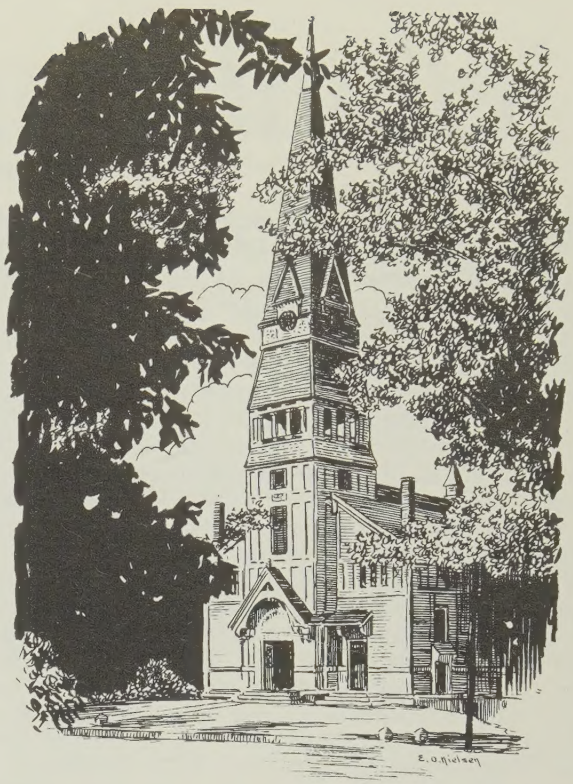
Each of these commissions will appreciate your suggestions. Pending their formal organization I should welcome letters containing ideas which I can present to the groups when they meet. We need extensive assistance from members throughout our fellowship if we are to serve our needs adequately.

"THE LORD WILL PROVIDE"

The Editor of THE CONGREGATIONALIST is happy to bring the paper back to its eight page size. Word from several members of the Executive Committee, and the vote of the Interim Committee on March 5, have made it possible to print a full sized paper again this month. The Chairman of the Executive Committee wrote, "Go ahead on that basis. . . . I don't know where the money is coming from but I'll go on the basis that the Lord will provide."

Yes, the Lord will provide, if the readers of THE CONGREGATIONALIST and all friends of genuine Congregationalism will put the money at His disposal! Do *you* find this paper worth reading? The box at the end of page eight will tell you that "subscriptions are invited". This doesn't mean "No pay, no paper", but it does give you an idea of what we consider a fair amount for you to contribute. We are going ahead on the basis of eight pages per issue in the belief that the money will be provided.

The words "sponsoring subscriptions $5.00 *or more* a year" mean what they say. Two interested laymen have recently sent in unsolicited gifts of $100.00 each. Perhaps you can't do anything like that, but whatever you can do will help the cause. Gifts may be sent either to the Editor or to Paul R. Biggs, Esq., Treasurer of the National Association, Barclay Building, Oregon City, Oregon. Please make remittances payable to National Association of Congregational Christian Churches. Let the Editor know of any Congregationalists who will read the paper and he will be glad to put their names on the mailing list.



WINTHROP CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
Holbrook, Massachusetts
A Charter Member Church of the National Association

SHOULD WE SEND DELEGATES TO BOSTON?

Many continuing churches and pro-Congregational members have been asking, "If we elect delegates to the 1958 General Council meeting in Boston, is there danger that we shall be committing ourselves to membership in the United Church?" A strong Association has recently elected a prominent Continuationist minister as a delegate on the basis of a statement which is printed in part herewith. THE CONGREGATIONALIST quotes this in the hope that it will help some of its readers to make this crucial decision.

"The following facts are set forth to show that the election of delegates to the General Council meeting of 1958 cannot properly be construed as putting this Association or its member churches into fellowship with the new United Church of Christ:

"1. This Association has been informed by its own legal counsel that it cannot consider itself a part of the United Church of Christ *until and unless* it has amended its present charter and by-laws.

"2. The General Council has not yet altered its Constitution and By-Laws in any fashion that would make it anything other than the General Council of Congregational Christian Churches. A simple resolution to proceed with a union does not have the power to alter the fundamental character and purpose of the General Council or to make it anything other than what its Constitution and By-Laws say it is.

"3. The General Synod of the United Church of Christ did itself seat some delegates to its meeting last June who had been elected with the provision that such election did not make the named individuals members of the United Church of Christ nor involve their churches in any relationship with the United Church.

"4. At least one member of the Executive Council of the new United Church of Christ was elected to that position with a clear understanding that he is uncommitted to the United Church.

"5. The Executive Committee of the General Council, in a letter of April 4, 1957, stated that in its opinion no Association or Conference can 'take' a church into the United Church. Likewise, in the leaflet 'Questions and Answers . . . After Omaha', it was stated that 'Churches not prepared to enter the union may continue as Association members without loss of standing as voting members of the Associations.' Other statements have been made assuring churches and ministers that they may retain their Congregational Christian standing indefinitely without becoming associated with the United Church and that no action need be taken to safeguard and keep this standing.

"6. The Court of Appeals stated that 'Union depends on voluntary action freely taken by independent, autonomous churches', and the General Council claims that the union is proceeding in strict accordance with the Court of Appeals decision.

"It would appear self-evident, then, that this Association may not properly consider the election of delegates at this time, to the General Council meeting to be held in Boston this year as an act capable of placing either this Congregational Association or its member churches into a relation of fellowship with the United Church of Christ."

THE FIELD IS THE WORLD

A goal of $20,000 for National Association missionary work was adopted at the March 4 meetings of The Commission on Missions and Church Extension of the National Association and the Directors of the Missionary Society of the Congregational Christian Churches. In order to reach this goal, it was voted to recommend that National Association member churches send one half of their benevolence money to this Missionary Society, and that gifts from Women's Groups be invited. Plans were made for starting a revolving loan fund for church building purposes.

Promotional work is to be started by the early publication of a single sheet describing the projects which the Commission has adopted, to be followed by a more complete brochure in the fall. Several new projects were discussed, and readiness was expressed to help the evangelistic work being carried on in Hong Kong and Formosa among Chinese refugees. In an early issue THE CONGREGATIONALIST will publish an article about this work, and other missionary projects will be reported from time to time. It is the intention of National Association churches to be active in the promotion of the Christian gospel wherever possible. "The field is the world". Contributions for these causes should be sent to Howell D. Davies, Treasurer, Room 2308, 100 North La Salle St., Chicago 2, Illinois.

They Like Our New Name

"I am 96 years old and have only ten per cent of normal eyesight, but I feel that I must write, for I almost shouted for joy when I received THE CONGREGATIONALIST".

— A Minister's Widow, Massachusetts

"I was thrilled to see THE CONGREGATIONALIST published".

— An Iowa Laywoman

"What a happy recovery of a name! To those of us who remember its days it means Dr. George Gordon of Boston, Dr. Lyman Abbott of Brooklyn, Dr. Amory Bradford of Montclair, and Dr. Washington Gladden of Columbus. It also means a group of churches that created and nurtured THE OUTLOOK and THE INDEPENDENT as well as THE CONGREGATIONALIST. . . . The fact that one could be a Christian and be allowed to grow mentally and morally without the imprisonment of ancient creeds was indeed a high calling".

— A Retired Minister, Massachusetts

"I'm hilarious over the new name".

— A Retired Minister, Colorado

"I am delighted to find that you are able to use the historic and meaningful title for the magazine. All of us who are old enough to remember all that THE CONGREGATIONALIST meant to us in the past years will be thrilled to know that it is in our possession again".

— A New York Pastor

NEWS NOTES

South Congregational Church, Hartford, Connecticut, where the Annual Meeting was held last fall, has announced plans for the erection of a new structure adjoining the present meeting house. This will accommodate much of the educational and social activity of the church. Land has also been acquired with a view to erecting housing facilities for "senior members" of the church. Dr. Henry David Gray is pastor.

Mayfair Congregational Church, Toledo, Ohio, Rev. Angus MacDonald, pastor, observed the tenth anniversary of its corporation with special services on February 16.

Rev. Ward K. Klopp, Scribe of the National Association, began work as pastor of the Congregational Church at Merrill, Mich., on March 1. On the same date, Rev. Harvey L. Pierce, formerly of St. Lawrence Congregational Church, Portland, Maine, began his pastorate at Winthrop Congregational Church, Holbrook, Mass. It is announced that Rev. Arthur W. Tiffen of Amherst, Ohio, has accepted a call to Tarentum, Penna.

New Member Church

The latest new member church in the National Association is the Bee Ridge Congregational Church of Brazil, Indiana. From reports received by the Editor it seems likely that other Indiana churches will soon be following in the footsteps of Bee Ridge.

Important Ohio Meeting

The Council of Concern held at the First Congregational Church of Toledo on January 25 had approximately 150 Congregationalists present, including several ministers whose names appeared in the list of signers of the protest against holding such a meeting, published in ADVANCE on February 28. Some of these have expressed regret that they were parties to an effort to prevent a meeting at which the problems and welfare of Congregationalism could be openly and frankly discussed in Christian spirit.

THE CONGREGATIONALIST is published and circulated by the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches of the United States. Subscriptions are invited: $2.00 a year (11 issues). Sponsoring subscriptions, $5.00 or more a year. Churches which send the paper to at least seventy-five per cent of their church families may subscribe at $1.00 per year per copy. For other special arrangements please consult the Editor, Rev. Joseph J. Russell, 61 East St., Melrose 76, Mass. Remittances may be sent to him or to Paul R. Biggs, Esq., Treasurer of the National Association, Barclay Bldg., Oregon City, Oregon. Please make remittances to order of National Association of Congregational Christian Churches.